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Approved For Release 2001/08/14 : CIA-RDP79R00904A000200010016-1

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DOCUMENT NO. 44NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐☒ DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C

NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 1-5-80

REVIEWER: 372044

25X1A9a TO :

FROM :

SUBJECT: "Discussion on Estimate Procedure"

DATE: 15 September 1954

Reference: Memorandum for Gen. Cabell from Gen Samford, subject as above,
30 August 1954.

1. The Reference presents nothing of any real value with respect to the estimating process.

2. No matter who said what to whom, I cannot believe that Gen. Samford is the real author of the Reference and its enclosure. It seems plain on the face of it that he has been sold a bill of goods by some pseudo-scholar on his staff. My personal estimate is that the true author is a reserve major who was formerly the principal of a small rural public school and may have a master's degree in education. Any old professor would recognize the hoof-marks of the educationist in these proposals, but others may be more readily taken in by educationist jargon.

3. The proposed "Estimate Procedure" is presented with an air of analytical profundity, but is nothing more than an elaboration of the obvious. It is a superficial and inadequate description of the analytical process normally followed in the development of estimates, procedures which any intelligent estimator might be expected to employ without the aid of this prescription. Its adoption could have no appreciable constructive effect. Certainly it could not, of itself, prove to be the panacea described in par. 8 of the proposals (one-third of the text).

4. On the other hand, formal adoption of these proposals, besides being rather ridiculous, could well hinder the application of intelligent judgment in the estimating process. In essence, this is a move to substitute form and procedure for thought, to devise an equation in which one need only substitute given values for the various factors in order to get the required answer, so that any hack can do it. This tendency, to reduce estimating to the process of filling in a form, has been observed before -- e.g., Gen. Bolling's proposals at one of the earliest meetings of the IAC (in 1950). The Services may find such mechanistic procedures useful and valid in certain situations, and advantageous in terms of the limited supply of intelligent manpower, but in the production of national intelligence estimates there can never be any substitute for the application of intelligent judgment. Moreover, the substitution of jargon for the King's English will never advance the cause.

5. In short, the scheme here presented could well be called "Estimating Made Easy for Thoughtless Illiterates".

6. The substance of these proposals cannot be taken seriously. The problem is really one in inter-agency relations: how to give the paper decent burial with the least embarrassment for those concerned. That is your department.

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